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WRITING DIALECT IN MOROCCO

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1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this article is to analyze how modern Moroccans write in their own dialect in Arabic, a subject which until today has been generally neglected by scholars, probably because the literary production in Moroccan Arabic is still minimal[1].

In an article published some years ago and entitled "Egyptian Arabic as a written language" his author, Gabriel M. Rosenbaum, pointed out that the aim of his study was to demonstrate how modern colloquial Egyptian Arabic has become a second written Arabic language in Egypt, in addition to Standard Literary Arabic[2]. Rosenbaum stresses that, in spite of the absence of a uniform orthography for writing in dialect:

> "Today, the volume of texts written in Egyptian *ʿāmmiyya* is enormous and increasing steadily (…) Egyptian *ʿāmmiyya* has become a written language; its texts are no longer just 'oral tradition', but also written literature; they are printed and published, often by publishers who are considered 'respectable' and by publishers who are supported by the establishment"[3].

The situation in Morocco is completely opposite: publications in Moroccan dialect are very scarce because almost all authors prefer to write either in Standard Literary Arabic or in French. Only a few authors have written some small pieces in dialect. However, in many novels written in Standard Literary Arabic, the authors use the dialect in all the dialogues, looking for more realism[4]. Other works in vernacular are compilations of dialectal poetry *(məlḥūn)* and proverbs and sayings.

In this context we should not forget that even the Moroccan literary production written in Standard Literary Arabic is by far not comparable with the Egyptian one: the linguistic, demographic, historical and cultural differences between the two countries are considerable[5].

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[1] The present article contains an enlarged version of a paper I presented at the 7th AIDA Congress held in Vienna, 8-9 September 2006. This article has been carried out within the Spanish research project HUM 05858-C02-01/F.

[2] Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", p. 281.

[3] Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", p. 318. The number of literary texts written in Egyptian Arabic quoted by the author in the bibliography (pp. 320-340) is quite impressive.

[4] Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 295.

[5] In Morocco, as a result of the colonial past, an important part of book production is still in French.

1.2.1. However, since the last decade the situation in Morocco is changing: a greater degree of political freedom[6], together with a favorable economic and cultural policy encouraged the rise of new independent newspapers, weekly magazines and publishing houses. Moroccan publishers print every year an increasing quantity of new titles (both in Arabic and French) and the same can also be said concerning music and cinema: in brief, the country enjoys today a veritable cultural 'boom'. Thus it is not surprising that some authors pay now more attention to their own dialect, a language which allows them to reach better expressivity and more realism. And this trend will surely continue in the future.

1.2.2. An especial case is *Nīšān* (= "straight"), an Arabic magazine (directed by Ahmed R. Benchemsi and edited by the same Moroccan company as the weekly *Tel Quel*) written in dialect and Standard Literary Arabic. Although the majority of its articles are in Standard Literary Arabic –often in a very peculiar code-switching instances with dialect, sometimes in the same phrase–, this weekly magazine includes in each issue interviews and leading articles in Moroccan dialect[7]. Due to its widespread diffusion *Nīšān* is now playing an important role for the normalization of the dialectal orthography. At the same time, this magazine contributes to make texts in dialect more 'respectable' among Moroccan readers and the cultural establishment.

1.3. In the following pages I will give an outline of the mean orthographic features used by Moroccans when writing in dialect[8]. Of course, I will focus my remarks only on such graphemic features diverging from the orthography of Standard Literary Arabic and thus need an explanation: dialectal words whose orthography is the same as in the written language are uninteresting in this context.

1.4. In order to assure a representative sample, this paper is based on data collected from several Moroccan sources of very different kind and published during a period of almost forty years time[9]. Those texts are:

a) theatre pieces and a small literary text written only in dialect (sources **H**, **L**, **S**, and **T**)[10].

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[6] In spite of some authoritarian relapses, the country enjoys now a more liberal political climate than under the late Hassan II.

[7] It seems important to emphasize here that *Nīšān* is not 'a weekly magazine written in dialect' (as it has been often alleged) but 'a weekly magazine written in Standard Literary Arabic with fragments in dialect': texts in Standard Literary Arabic clearly predominate in all issues I have checked.

[8] On Moroccan Arabic see Brunot, *Introduction;* Harrell, *Reference grammar;* Marçais, *Esquisse;* Willms, *Einführung;* Durand, *Profilo;* Heath, *Jewish and Muslim dialects,* pp. 1-10; Ishihara, *Morokko arabiago;* Aguadé, "Estudio descriptivo"; Aguadé, "Morocco".

[9] From 1977 to 2006.

[10] **H** (= *Ḥallāq Darb al-Fuqarāʔ*) by Y. Fāḍəl (born in Casablanca 1949, today one of the most famous Moroccan authors) is a small theatre piece set in a popular quarter in Casablanca (on the author see Jay, *Dictionnaire,* pp. 185-188). **L** (= *Lālla Žmīla*) by Z. Bən Būšta (winner of the Moroccan National Theatre prize in 2004) is a piece set in Tangiers. **S** (= *Səḷṭān ṭ-ṭūḷḅa*) by ʕA. l-Kənfāwi (1928-1976) is a theatre piece set in Fes during the burlesque festivity of the 'Sultan of the students'. **T** (= *Tqərqīb n-nāb*) by Y. A. l-ʕAlāmi is a kind of modern 'bestiary' in which his author describes ironically several human types, all of them very

b) short dialectal texts (mostly dialogues) embedded in novels written in Classical Arabic (sources **D** and **M**)[11].

c) compilations of proverbs and sayings (sources **A** and **P**).

d) a guide to the Moroccan theory driving test *(Kūd lārūt)*[12], written only in dialect (source **K**).

e) articles from the Moroccan weekly *Nīšān* (source **N**).

2. General remarks

2.1. As it is the case in other Arabic speaking countries[13], when writing in dialect Moroccans have two opposite possibilities: either to preserve as much as possible the orthography of Classical Arabic or to innovate trying to represent the phonemes of the spoken language: the result is generally a fluctuation between both tendencies.

2.1.1. The texts quoted in this article reflect different dialects: for instance, sources **H**, **M**, **T** and **N** represent the dialect of Casablanca, source **D** that of Marrakech and source **L** that of Tangiers[14]. In my transcription, specific features of those dialects are considered[15].

2.2. In older texts, and due to technical reasons (lack of special typographical characters in printing presses at that time), the European phonemes /p/, /v/, /g/ in borrowings are always represented by ب, ب/ف and ك, respectively. Examples:
ستوب "stop", فيلاج "village", كراج "garage"[16].

2.3. Since the use of computers has become generalized (and text processing programs like Word offer to the user the choice between different alphabets like Persian and Urdu), such phonemes are now often represented by پ, ڤ and گ. Examples:

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common in the modern Moroccan society: l-ʕAlāmi was born 1961 in Larache and is now professor of English at the Kenitra University (see on him Aguadé, *"Darle al pico",* where this text has been transcribed and translated into Spanish).

[11] **D** (= *aḍ-Ḍarīḥ*) by ʕA. Abū l-ʕAzam is an autobiographical novel based on his own childhood in Marrakech during the fifties of the last century (see Jay, *op. cit.,* pp. 28-30). This kind of texts are (together with **N**, see below) by far the most important written source for Moroccan Arabic. **M** (= *Mītrū muḥāl*) is a novel by Y. Fāḍəl.

[12] French *code de la route.* The title is prone to misunderstanding because this small book is not the Moroccan Highway Code but only an aid for the driving test. On this text see Aguadé, "Dialekt" (with transcription and translation into German of some passages). This small book has no publication data but –according to the photos it includes– its first edition must have been the end of the sixties or beginning of the seventies of the last century.

[13] Concerning Egypt see Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", p. 284.

[14] **K** reflects as well a dialect close to that of Casablanca. The language of the proverbs in **A** and **P** represents a Prehilalian dialect. Source **S** (a posthumous edition) shows features from both Hilalian and Prehilalian dialects.

[15] For instance: *qāl* "he said", *qŭlt* "I said" in **L**, but *gāl, gŭlt* in **D**, **H**, **M**, **T** and **N**.

[16] Examples from K: see Aguadé, "Dialekt", pp. 75-76.

ڤيديو كليپ "video clip", إديث پياف "Edith Piaf"[17], الهُمْبْرْݣْر "hamburger", الكيتشوُپْ "Ketchup"[18], پْلومْبي *plōmbi* "plumber"[19], سپنيول *spənyūl* "Spaniard"[20].

2.4. It seems to be a Moroccan peculiarity the tendency of many authors to give full vocalized texts when writing in dialect[21] (see examples in appendices 1 and 2), an absurd choice that helps only to make reading of such texts more difficult.

3. Vowels

3.1. The short vowel /ə/[22] is usually marked by *fatḥa* or *sukūn.* Examples for the use of *fatḥa* are:

باش نْخَلَّصْ *bāš nxəlləṣ* "in order that I pay"[23], شَفْتْ *šəft* "I have seen"[24], ما عْرَفْتْ *ma ʕṛəft* "I don't know"[25].

Examples for the use of *sukūn* are:

حتّى واحْدْ *ḥətta wāḥəd* "nobody"[26], سِيدي بْنْ مْشْعْلْ *Sīdi bən Məšʕəl* "Sīdi Ben Mešʕal"[27], وَاحْدْ اُلْبْنْتْ *wāḥd əl-bənt* "a girl"[28].

In such examples, as we can see, the use of *sukūn* is ambiguous because it marks both the vowel /ə/ and the lack of vowel in a consonant.

3.2. However, it is not unusual to find both *fatḥa* and *sukūn* marking the vowel /ə/ in the same line. Examples:

الكَلْبْ كَلْبْ *l-kəlb kəlb* "a dog remains (always) a dog"[29], عَنْدُه اُلْحَقْ *ʕəndu l-ḥəqq* "he's right"[30], لَحَفْلَةْ سَلْطَانْ اُلطَّلْبَة *l-ḥəflət ṣəlṭān ṭ-ṭŭlḅa* "for the party of the sultan of the students"[31].

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[17] Examples from N.

[18] Examples from T: see Aguadé *"Darle al pico",* pp. 246-247. About these graphemes in Egyptian texts see Rosenbaum "Egyptian Arabic", pp. 288-289.

[19] T 90.

[20] L 23.

[21] Vocalization in Egyptian texts is very unusual (Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", p. 294); however, collections of proverbs tend to be largely vocalized (Rosenbaum, *op. cit.,* p. 295) as it is the case in Morocco.

[22] The short vowel /ə/ represents diachronically the *fuṣḥā* short vowels /a/, /i/ and /u/: Aguadé, "Morocco", pp. 288-289; Aguadé, "Estudio descriptivo", p. 94.

[23] D 88.

[24] D 90.

[25] D 90.

[26] S 75.

[27] S 83.

[28] S 74.

[29] P 158.

[30] S 56.

[31] S. 47.

3.3. In vocalized texts /ə/ is sometimes written with *ḍamma.* Examples:
كُفْتَة *kəfta* "ground meat", فُلْفُلْ *fəlfəl* "red pepper"[32].

3.4. Due to the influence of *fuṣḥā* orthography vowel length is in many cases not marked. Examples:
رَجْلْهَا *ṛāžəlha* "her husband"[33] (= *fuṣḥā* رَجُلها), كُنْ *kūn* "if"[34], مُهِمْ "important"[35].

But: كُونْ رَاجْلْ *kūn ṛāžəl* "be a man"[36], لوُغْتْهُمْ (= *fuṣḥā* لغتهم) *lūġthŭm* "their language"[37].

4. Consonants

4.1. It is very common to set an *ʔalif* before words beginning with vowel-less consonants. Examples:
احنا *ḥna* "we"[38], اعطيني *ʕṭīni* "give me"[39], احسن *ḥsən* "better"[40], اَشْكُونْ *škūn* "who"[41], أَبّاك *ḅḅʷāk* "your father"[42]. In some texts the *ʔalif* is vocalized with a *ḍamma* (even after vowels!): وَاش حَتّى أُنْتَ؟ *w-āš ḥətta nta?* "you too?"[43], ها أُحْنا موُجُدينْ *ha ḥna mūžūdīn* "here we are"[44], أُنْتَ *nta* "you"[45].

4.2. In spite of the fact that interdentals in almost all Moroccan dialects shifted to occlusives, in our texts they are usually marked (following the *fuṣḥā* orthography). Examples:
هذي كثر من عشرين عام *hādi ktəṛ mən ʕəšrīn ʕām* "more then twenty years ago"[46], ثقيلة *tqīla* "heavy"[47], ثلاثة *tlāta* "three"[48], الملك الثاني *l-malīk t-tāni* "the second king"[49], ثلث أيام

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32 Examples from S 62.
33 T 50, 54, 66, 106; H 23, L 20.
34 T50.
35 S 58.
36 S 58.
37 S 60.
38 D 91, H 43, S 19.
39 S 19.
40 S 20.
41 S 60.
42 H 36.
43 S 60.
44 S 87.
45 S 59.
46 H 36.
47 H 48.
48 H 49, D 77.
49 D 77.

tәlt ĭyyām "three days"[50], كتار *ktār* "many"[51], هَذَ اُلْشي *hād š-ši* "this"[52], ذْهْبْ *dhәb* "gold"[53], ثْمَّ *tәmma* "there, over there"[54], حرثنا الارض *ḥrәtna l-lәṛḍ* "we plowed the earth"[55], عاَوْدْ ثَاني *ʕāwәd tāni* "again"[56].

4.2. But they are also many examples with occlusives instead of interdentals: ثْلاتينْ عَام *tlātīn ʕām* "thirty years"[57], هاد الدار *hād ḍ-ḍāṛ* "this house"[58], هادي زوينة *hādi zwīna* "this one (girl) is beautiful"[59], عاوتاني (= عاود ثاني) *ʕāwәd tāni* "again"[60], كِالتُّورْ (= ثور) *ki-ṭ-ṭūṛ* "like a bull"[61], البَرْغُوتْ (= برغوث) *l-bәrġūt* "the fleas"[62].

4.2.1. Both possibilities may occur in a single word: اُلتَالْتْ *t-tālәt* "the third one"[63].

4.3. Secondary pharyngealization of some consonant phonemes is one of the more characteristic features of Hilalian dialects in Morocco (*rās > ṛāṣ* "head", *dār > ḍāṛ* "house", etc.)[64]. This pharyngealization is normally not noted in the texts, even in the cases in which it would be easy to note it because the corresponding phonemes do exist in the Arabic alphabet (=/ṣ/ ص, /ḍ/ ض, /ṭ/ ط).

We find, then, usually the graphies راس / رأس for *ṛāṣ* and دار for *ḍāṛ*. An interesting example is مْنْ الرَّاسْ لْصَّاگْ *mәn ṛ-ṛāṣ l-ṣ-ṣāg* (= *fuṣḥā* ساق) "from head to calf"[65] where the pharyngealization is marked only in the second substantive.

4.4. Labialization and labiovelarization of some phonemes[66] is characteristic for Moroccan dialects, especially for the Hilalian ones[67]. With the Arabic alphabet it is

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[50] D 77.
[51] D 75.
[52] S 58, 86.
[53] S 87.
[54] S 87.
[55] L 36.
[56] S 86.
[57] T 66.
[58] D 80.
[59] T 74.
[60] H 48, 49, 53.
[61] T 66.
[62] S 59.
[63] S 94.
[64] Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 290.
[65] T 74.
[66] Such phonemes are: /b/, /m/, /f/, /k/, /g/, /ġ/ and /q/.
[67] See Harrell, *Reference grammar,* pp. 9-10; Heath, *Jewish and Muslim dialects,* pp. 174-176.

of course impossible to mark such a feature:
مالين, مْوَالينْ *mwālīn / ṃṃ^w ālīn* "owners"[68].

4.4.1. However, in some vocalized texts, it seems that their authors try to mark the labialization in such cases setting a *tašdīd:*
مُّو *ṃṃ^w u* "his mother"[69].

4.5. Phonemes /g/ and /q/. In all Hilalian dialects in Morocco the regular realization of /q/ is /g/[70].

This phoneme may also represent *fuṣḥā* /ğ/ in certain contexts[71] as well as /g/ in borrowings from Berber and European languages. The phoneme /g/ is marked by the following graphemes:

ق ،گ ،ك, گ and ڭ. Examples:

تْگُولْ *dgūl/tgūl* "you say"[72], گُلْ *gūl* "say!"[73], گولْتْها ليك *gəltha / gŭltha līk* "I said it to you"[74], كاع *gāʕ* "all / at all"[75], قلتي *gəlti / gŭlti* "you said"[76], الكارو،الگارّو *l-gāṛṛu* "the cigarette"[77], السْويكْلاصْ *s-swīglāṣ* (= French *essuie-glace*) "windshield wipers"[78].

4.5.1. Peculiar is the orthography used by al-ʕAlāmi (source T). When the phoneme /g/ represents diachronically *fuṣḥā* /ğ/ is written in his text always as چ (Persian *čim*). Examples:
چالْسْ *gāləs* "sitting"[79], چزّارْ *gəzzār* "butcher"[80], كَيْچْلْسْ *ka-yĭgləs* "he sits"[81].

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[68] H 32, S 87.

[69] T 58.

[70] Heath*, Jewish and Muslim dialects,* pp. 141 ss.; Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 290. However, exceptions to the shift *q > g* are numerous: *bqāt* "she remained", *qlīl* "little", *qdīm* "old". In traditional urban dialects (like Fes or Tetouan) /q/ has a realization /ʔ/: none of our texts show this feature.

[71] The phonem /ğ/ in contact with sibilants deaffricated to /g/ (or /d/): *ğāza > gāz / dāz* "he passed (by)". See Heath, *Jewish and Muslim dialects,* pp. 136-138 and Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 290.

[72] T 86, 102.

[73] T 114. The vowel /u/ is here long, not short (analogy to the long vowel of the imperfect: *ygūl* "he will say").

[74] D 54. The *wāw* in *gŭltha* is merely a *mater lectionis,* the vowel is short.

[75] S 20, 79.

[76] H 67.

[77] Written with 59.

[78] K 80.

[79] T 38.

[80] T 38.

[81] T 74.

Other authors use in such cases always ج or گ:
جالسة *gālsa* "she is sitting"[82], تاجزارت *tāgəzzārət* "occupation of butcher, butchery"[83], الگلاسة *l-gəllāsa* "manager (f.) of a public bath (for women)"[84].

5. The definite article

5.1. The article is generally written الـ (following the *fuṣḥā* orthography). Examples:
الكلاب *l-klāb* "the dogs", ألبومك التاني *əlbūmək t-tāni* "your second album", الناس *n-nās* "the people", الكسوة *l-kəswa* "the suit", الحانوت *l-ḥānūt* "the store", الفلوس *l-flūs* "the money", هذيك الدار *hādīk ḍ-ḍāṛ* "that house"[85], في القلب *f-əl-qəlb* "in the heart"[86].

5.2. The article is sometimes written as: لْـ. Examples:
لْخْبار *lə-xbāṛ* "the news"[87], لْبِرْمي *l-bīrmi* (=French *permis*) "drivers license"[88], لفلوس *l-flūs* "the money"[89].

5.3. The vowel /ə/ of the article *əl-* can be marked with اُ. Examples:
بَابْ اُلْخُوخَة *bāb əl-xūxa* "the Gate of the Peach"[90], اُلْبْلاَدْ *l-blād* "the country"[91], وْاُلْعلْمْ *w-l-ʕəlm* "and the science"[92], اُلنَّاسْ دْ اُلْمْدِينَة *n-nās d-lə-mdīna* "the people of the city"[93].

5.4. This اُ is written even in cases in which /ə/ does not occur because the article follows a word ending in vowel. Examples:
ايوَا اُلسِّي اُلْوَزيرْ فايْنْ اَتَايْ؟ *īwa, s-si l-wzīr, fāyn ātāy?* "well, Mister Minister, where is the tea?"[94], نْسيتو اُلْمُهِمْ *nsītu l-mūhīmm* "you did forget the most important"[95].

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[82] D 76.
[83] H 58.
[84] L 58.
[85] Examples from N and H.
[86] P 111.
[87] D 45.
[88] K 79.
[89] H 56
[90] S 48 (*Bāb əl-Xūxa* is the name of a gate in the walls of Fes).
[91] S 84.
[92] S 76.
[93] S 83.
[94] S 60.
[95] S 58.

5.5. In one text (source **A**) the definite article is written either ـــٱلْ or ـــلَ (sometimes both graphies in the same line). Examples:
ٱلجوُعْ ولَعْطَشْ *ž-žūʕ w-lə-ʕṭəš* “hunger and thirst”[96], ٱلرجَلْ لَمْطلق *ṛ-ṛāžəl lə-mṭəlləq* “the divorced man”[97], ٱلطْريقْ فٱلبحَرْ *ṭ-ṭrīq f-lə-bḥəṛ* “the path in the sea”[98].

5.6. There is one example where the article has not been noted:
وف نهار(= النهار) الثالث *u-f-n-nhāṛ t-tālət* “and in the third day”[99].

6. Pronouns

6.1. The pronoun for the 1st person singular, *āna* “I”, may be written with or without *hamza*. Examples:
أنا [100], اَنا [101], أنا عْروبي *āna ʕṛūbi* “I am a peasant”[102], أنا عارفة *āna ʕāṛfa* “I (f.) know”[103], حتى أنا من ديك الناحية *ḥətta āna mən dīk n-nāḥya* “I am too from this region”[104], أنا ديما فْ الخدْمة دْيالْك *āna dīma f-əl-xədma dyālək* “I am always at your service”[105], حْتيَّ اَنا *ḥətta āna* “me too”[106].

6.2. The pronoun for the 1st person plural, *ḥna* “we”, is written حنا, احنا or اُحنا. Examples:
احنا *ḥna* “we”[107], حنا *ḥna* “we”[108], اُحْنا هْنا جَالْسينْ *ḥna hna gālsīn* “we are sitting here”[109], حنا،حنا كلنا *ḥna, ḥna kŭllna* “we, we all”[110].

6.3. In the 2nd person singular (mas. *nta,* fem. *nti*) a *kasra* helps sometimes to distinguish the feminine forms. Examples:
انتِ خْتِي *nti xti* “you are my sister”[111], انت اللي بغيتي هذا الشي *nta lli bġīti hād š-ši* “you are

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[96] A 134.
[97] A 110.
[98] A 144.
[99] D 44.
[100] H 38; L 17; M 103, 198; N.
[101] S 58, 59, 82; M 103, 196, 197.
[102] N.
[103] L 42.
[104] H 42.
[105] D 77.
[106] S 35.
[107] D 91; H 43; S 19; M 168, 171.
[108] L 24, 46; N.
[109] S 36.
[110] L 79.
[111] L 22.

the one who likes this”[112], ها أُنت دَب سْلْطانْ اُلطّلْبة *ha nta dāba ṣəḷṭān ṭ-ṭŭḷḅa* “you are now the sultan of the students”[113], انت عارفة *nti ʕāṛfa* “you (f.) know”[114].

6.3.1. Sometimes the fem. *nti* is marked by a ي:
وانتِي ما كتفيقي من النعاس *u-nti ma ka-tifīqi mən n-nʕās* “and you (f.) do not wake up from the sleep”[115].

6.3.2. In texts from Northern Morocco the 2nd person singular (masc. and fem.) is *ntīn:* انتين [116].

6.4. The 2nd person plural, *ntūma* “you”, is written أنتم , انتما or انتوما. Examples:
وانتم ماجين *w-ntūma māžīn* “and you are coming”[117], ولكن انتوما فالمدينة *wālākīn ntūma f-lə-mdīna* “but you in the city”[118], وَانْتُمَا اَسْيادْنا اُلطّلْبة *u-ntūma, a-syādna ṭ-ṭŭḷḅa* “and you, oh students”[119].

6.5. The pronoun of the 3rd person plural is *hūma,* written in our texts هم, هما, or هوما. Examples:
حْتّىَ هُما *ḥətta hūma* “they too”[120], اسبانيول حتى همّ *s-sbānyūl ḥətta hūma* “the Spaniards too”[121], اهما يدخلو عند الملك *u-hūma ydəxlu ʕənd əl-mālīk* “and they entered to the king”[122], ها هُمَ بْداوْا كَيْقَرْبُوا *ha hūma bdāw ka-yqəṛbu* “here they began to come closer”[123], هوما جدامين *hūma xəddāmīn* “they are working”[124].

6.6. The suffixed personal pronoun of the 3rd person masc. singular is *–u* or (after vowel) *–h.* In the texts it is written either ـه or (more often) و [125]. Examples:

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[112] H 46.
[113] S 56.
[114] H 44.
[115] M 192.
[116] L 42, 43.
[117] L 53.
[118] N.
[119] S 35. See also M 156.
[120] S 76.
[121] L 31.
[122] D 76.
[123] S 105.
[124] N.
[125] و is here a *mater lectionis* indicating that the vowel is /u/ (as it is the case in گولت *gŭlt* “I said”).

عندو *ʕəndu* "he has / beside him"[126], النهار كلّو *n-nhāṛ kŭllu* "the whole day"[127], قدّامو *qŭddāmu* "in front of him"[128], دينو *dīnu* "his religion", منّو *mənnu* "from him", مُّوو *ṃṃu* "his mother" [129], مراتو *mṛātu* "his wife", حياتو *ḥāyātu* "his life"[130], بحالو *bḥālu* "like him"[131], أنا شفتو *āna šəftu* "I saw him"[132], مُّوه *ṃṃu* "his mother"[133], عنده *ʕəndu* "he has / beside him"[134], كله *kŭllu* "all"[135].

7.1. The near and far demonstrative pronouns (*hād, hāda, hādi, hādu* and *hādāk, hādik, hāduk, dāk, dīk, dūk*)[136] have various graphies, often with the interdental *ḏāl* according to the *fuṣḥā* orthography of the demonstratives. Examples:
هذا الدرب *hād d-dərb* "this small street", هاذا الشي *hād š-ši* "this", هذاك *hādāk* "that"[137], هَادْ الْبْحَرْ *hād lə-bḥər* "this sea"[138], داك الشي *dāk š-ši* "that"[139], دوك عباد الله *dūk ʕībād Ḷḷāh* "those people"[140], هاد الهضرة *hād əl-həḍra* "this speech"[141], هادوك الناس *hādūk n-nās* "those people"[142], هاد الشي *hād š-ši* "this"[143], هَذ أُلْشي *hād š-ši* "this", هَذ أُلْمْرَة *hād lə-mṛa* "this wife"[144].

7.2. The relative pronoun *lli* is written اللي, للي, اللِّيُ or اُلِّي. Examples:
ما عرفت شكون هذا اللي قال ليا *ma ʕṛəft škūn hāda lli gāl lĭyya* "I do not know who is this

[126] H 16, 55, 56 ; T 46, 114; M 80.
[127] T 46.
[128] T 46.
[129] Examples from T 42.
[130] Examples from H 16, 38.
[131] N 17.
[132] M 158.
[133] T 42.
[134] H 15.
[135] H 53; M 78.
[136] On these demonstratives see Harrell, *Reference grammar,* pp. 143-144 and Aguadé / El-yaacoubi, *Skūra,* pp. 124-125.
[137] Examples from H 22 and 24.
[138] T 110.
[139] S 20.
[140] S 21.
[141] N.
[142] N.
[143] N.
[144] Examples from S 58 and 86.

(person) which said to me"[145], والرجل اللي دخل للحبس *u-ṛ-ṛāžəl lli dxəl l-əl-ḥəbs* "and the man who went to prison"[146], وللي قال لا *u-lli qāl 'la'* "and the one who said 'no' "[147].

8. Verbs.

8.1. The majority of the Moroccan dialects present a suffix *–ti* in the 2nd singular of the perfect (= *ktəbti* "you [masc. / fem.] wrote")[148]. This person is generally marked by a suffixed ـتي. Thus is possible to make a distinction between the 1rst and the 2nd persons when writing in Arabic (= كتبت *ktəbt* "I wrote" but كتبتي *ktəbti* "you wrote"). Examples:

جيتي *žīti* "you came", عرفتي *ʕṛəfti* "you know", درتي *dərti* "you made", كنتي *kŭnti* "you have been"[149], مشيتي *mšīti* "you went"[150], ما شفتيهش كيعرج *ma šəftīh-š ka-yəʕṛəž* "did you not see him limping?"[151], شُفتي القَمَر يا حَبيبْتي *šəfti l-qamar ya ḥabībti?* "did you see the moon, oh my darling (f.)?"[152].

8.1.1. Sometimes the 2nd person is marked by a *kasra.* Examples:

آش قلتِ *āš qŭlti* "what did you say?"[153], فحال للي جبَرْتِ أنتِ *fḥāl lli žbərti nti* "like that what you (f.) found"[154], شفتِ أنا راه مرا فحالك *šəfti āna ṛāh mṛa fḥālək* "you see, I am a woman like you"[155].

8.2. The suffix of the 3rd person singular feminine of the perfect (of regular verbs) may be in Moroccan dialects either *–ət* or *–āt: šərbət / šərbāt* "she drank"[156]. Sometimes the authors show clearly what kind of dialect they are writing:

لا حالتك تحسنات *la ḥāltək tḥəssnāt* "nor your condition became better"[157], ما وقفات *ma*

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[145] M 94. Other examples in M 61, 68, 92, 94, 133.
[146] H 41. Other examples in H 15, 25, 31, 46, 57, 77.
[147] L 35. Other examples in L 17, 30, 46, 47, 52, 77.
[148] See Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 291.
[149] Examples from N.
[150] H 46. See also H 18, 35, 41, 49, 50, 54, 60, 66, 70.
[151] M 132. See also M 44, 45, 69, 72, 99, 118, 168.
[152] T 66.
[153] L 41.
[154] L 49.
[155] L 19.
[156] The ending *–ət* occurs, for instance, in Fez, Anjra, Chaouen, Taza; the variant *–āt* is secondary (an analogy from the weak verbs) and occurs in Casablanca, Meknes, Marrakech (see Heath, *Jewish and Muslim dialects,* pp. 222-225; Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 291).
[157] H 17.

wəqfāt "she did not stop"[158], إلا ما زْرّْقات عينيها *īla ma ẓəṛṛqāt ʕīnīha* "if she has not put blue make up on her eyes"[159], شْكْرَاتْ *šəkrāt* "she did thank"[160].

8.2.1. But in other cases *fuṣḥā* oriented graphies are ambiguous concerning this point. Examples:
إِلي شَعْلَتْ اُلْعَافِيَة فِالسِيَارَة *īla šəʕləṭ/šəʕlāt l-ʕāfya f-s-sĭyyāra* "if the car burns"[161], حتّى دْخْلَتْ *ḥətta dəxlət / dəxlāt* "until she came in"[162].

8.3. Unlike the *fuṣḥā* orthography, in the 3rd plural of the perfect the so called *ʔalif al-wiqāya* or *ʔalif al-fāṣila* is generally not written[163]. Examples:
لقاو (instead of لقاوا) *lqāw* "they found", يديرو اللي بغاو *ydīru lli bġāw* "they will do what they like"[164], وقالو ليا *u-gālu lĭyya* "and they said to me"[165], سير شوف آش كيديرو *sīr šūf āš ka-ydīru* "go and look what they are doing"[166].

8.3.1. However, they are some some of *fuṣḥā* oriented orthography with *ʔalif al-wiqāya.* Examples:
وما كيقلوا والو *u-ma ka-ygūlu wālu* "and they do not say anything"[167], كانوا *kānu* "they were"[168], وْضْرْبُوا ليه *u-ḍəṛbu līh* "and they beat him"[169].

8.4. It is very surprising to see that some authors use a prefix إ or إي (instead of يـ) in the 3rd person of the imperfect, especially because the same authors write يـ in other cases (sometimes they use both graphies in the same page!). Examples:
لّلي يحَبْ الحُوت إي فزّگْ سَرْوالوا *lli yḥəbb l-ḥūt yfəzzəg sərwālu* "he who likes fish wets his trousers"[170], إي صبر *yəṣbəṛ* "he will be patient"[171], أمْشَا إعَيَّطْ على وَحَدْ الطبيب *u-mša*

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[158] H 25.
[159] T 122.
[160] S 86.
[161] K 90.
[162] S 86.
[163] See Wright*, Grammar,* vol. 1, p. 11. See also Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", p. 305.
[164] Examples from N.
[165] H 17.
[166] M 104.
[167] H 16.
[168] T 62.
[169] S 72.
[170] A 134. Other examples in A 44, 48, 72, 76, 100, 102, 106, 138.
[171] A 118.

yʕəyyəṭ ʕla wāḥəd ṭ-ṭbīb "and he went out to call a doctor"[172], باش إمكن إقطع *bāš yĭmkən yəqṭəʕ* "in order that he can cross"[173], إشوف *yšūf* "he will see"[174], باش إعْمَلْ *bāš yəʕməl* "in order that he makes"[175], إي كُونْ (sic, instead of يكون) *ykūn* "he will be"[176].

8.5. The present marker *ka-* is always written together with the verb[177]. Examples: ما كنشوفهمش *ma ka-nšūfhŭm-š* "I do not see them", أنا ما كنمشيش للقهاوي *āna ma ka-nəmši-š l-əl-qhāwi* "I do not go to cafes", عندهم خمسين طريقة باش كيطيبو الخبز *ʕəndhŭm xəmsīn ṭarīqa bāš ka-yṭĭyybu l-xŭbz* "they have fifty different ways to prepare bread", ما كتربح فلوس؟ *ma ka-tərbəḥ flūs?* "you do not earn money?"[178], مَا كَيْشْرْبْ غيرْ كُوكَا *ma ka-yĭšrəb ġīr kūka* "he drinks only Coca Cola", كَتْمْشي لْلْعُمْرَة جُوجْ مْرَّاتْ فْالْعَامْ *ka-təmši l-əl-ʕŭmṛa žūž məṛṛāṭ f-əl-ʕām* "she makes the ʕUmrah twice yearly"[179], الناس كيموت بالجوع *n-nās ka-ymūt b-ž-žūʕ* "people are starving of hunger", ما كنحس بوالو *ma ka-nḥəss b-wālu* "I do not feel nothing"[180].

9. Conjunctions adverbs and prepositions

9.1. The preposition *f-* (*fī-* before suffixed pronouns) "in, into, among, about, on, by" presents the following graphies: ف, في, ـف (written together with the next word) and ـف (written separated from the next word). It is often the case that two or three from these variants occur in a single page of the same author. Examples: شْحَال هادي ف الساعة *šḥāl hādi f-s-sāʕa* "what time is it?"[181], ف الخدمة *f-əl-xədma* "at work"[182], ف وسط القصر *f-wŭsṭ əl-qṣəṛ* "in the middle of the palace"[183], في أيام الفرنسيس *f-ĭyyām əl-frānsīs* "during the French Protectorate"[184], في الدار *f-ḍ-ḍāṛ* "at home"[185], جيتي

[172] D 91.
[173] D 76.
[174] D 79.
[175] D 79.
[176] A 130.
[177] On this marker see Aguadé, "Morocco", p. 292. They are in Moroccan dialects other present markers but in our sources only occurs *ka-*.
[178] Examples from M 94, 99, 111 and 138.
[179] Examples from T 58 and 94.
[180] Examples from L 31 and 69.
[181] D 55.
[182] D 77.
[183] D 76.
[184] H 26.

في الوقت *žīti f-l-wŭqt* "you came in time"[186], فْالدُّنْيا *f-əd-dənya* "in the world"[187], جُوجْ مْرَّاتْ فْالْعَامْ *žūž məṛṛāṭ f-l-ʕām* "twice yearly"[188], فباب المندوبية *f-bāb l-Məndūbĭyya* "at the gate of the Mandoubiyya"[189], أَنْتَ فْـــ دَارَكْ وَأَنَا فْـــ داري *nta f-ḍāṛək w-āna f-ḍāṛī* "you in your home and me in mine"[190].

9.2. Depending on the dialect the preposition *l-* "to, for" may insert an *–ī–* before suffixed pronouns (i.e. *līh, līk, līna*); the dialect of Casablanca, for instance, presents this predesinential *–ī–*, Prehilalian dialects have always forms without it (*lu, lək, lna*). In our texts this vowel is often not marked (some authors may use both graphies in the same line) and only additional information about the dialect type can help the reader to decide whose form is correct. Examples:
قل ليهم *gūl līhŭm* "say to them" (dialect of Casablanca)[191], ݣالت ليها *gālət līha* (dialect of Marrakech) "she said to her"[192], أنا ما قلت لهم *āna ma gəlt /gŭlt līhŭm* (dialect of Casablanca) "I did not say to them"[193], وْهِيَ تْݣُولّْهْ *u-hĭyya tgūl / dgūl līh* (dialect of Casablanca) "and she says to him"[194], قالو لينا جيبو فلان قلنا لهم واخا *gālu līna žību Flān, gəlna / gŭlna līhŭm wāxxa* (dialect of Casablanca) "they said to us: 'bring us so-and-so', we said to them: 'all right' "[195], قلت لك *qŭlt lək* (dialect of Tangiers) "I said to you"[196], شكون قالك هذ الشي؟ *škūn qāl lək hād š-ši* (dialect of Tangiers) "who said to you this"[197], وملي قلت لها *u-məlli qŭlt lha* (dialect of Tangiers) "and when I said to her"[198].

9.3. The conjunction *u- /w-* "and" is generally written و. But the graphies أ or اُ are also found. Examples:

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[185] M 42.
[186] M 185.
[187] S 51.
[188] T 94.
[189] L 31. The Mandoubiyya was the official residence of the representative of the Moroccan sultan in Tangiers.
[190] P 122.
[191] M 104.
[192] D 45.
[193] H 45.
[194] T 66.
[195] H 35.
[196] L 19, 34, 40 and 49.
[197] L 28.
[198] L 29.

وانتِ *u-nti* "and you (f.)"[199], وْضَرْبُوا ليه *u-ḍəṛbu līh* "and they beat him"[200], اُمشاو لعند الملك *u-mšāw l-ʕənd əl-malīk* "and they went to the king"[201], وْاللُوزْ أُالزّهَرْ وْالْمَسْكَة الحُرَّة *u-l-lūz u-z-zhəṛ u-l-məska l-hŭṛṛa* "and almonds, orange blossoms and musk"[202].

9.4. The conjunction *īla* "if" (introduces real conditional clauses) is written: إلا ،إيلا ، إلى ، الى or يْلا: يْلا بغى *īla bġa* "if he likes", يْلا كان *īla kān* "if he is"[203], إلِي شَعْلَتْ الْعَافِيَة فِالسِيَارَة *īla šəʕləṭ/šəʕlāt l-ʕāfya f-s-sĭyyāra* "if the car burns"[204].

9.5. The adverbs *dāba* "now", *wāxxa* "yes, all right, of course, o.k" and *šwĭyya* "a little, a little bit, a little while" have following graphies:
دابا، دبا، دب، داب [205], واخّا ،وَاخَا ، وَخّا ، وخَّ [206], شوية , شْوِيّا [207].

9.6. In negative clauses the negation *–š(i)* is always suffixed to its preceding word. Examples:
أنا ما كنمشيش للقهاوي *āna ma ka-nəmši-š l-əl-qhāwi* "I do not go to cafes"[208], ما شفتيهش كيعرج *ma šəftīh-š ka-yəʕṛəž* "did you not see him limping?"[209], أنا ما قلتش *āna ma gəlt-š/gŭlt-š* "I did not say", ما عرفتش *ma ʕṛəft-š* "I do not know"[210].

10. The above quoted examples show clearly that compounding of words trough the adding of particles or prepositions is quite common[211]:
كنمشيش, قلتش, شفتيهش, قالك (=قال لك), تْگُولّه (= تقول له), عاوتاني (= عاود ثاني). Other examples are: كلشي[212] and كولشي (=كل شي) *kŭll ši* "all, every thing"[213], دلحمام (= د

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[199] M 69.
[200] S 72.
[201] D 76.
[202] T 30.
[203] N.
[204] See above, § **8.2.1.**
[205] Examples from D 54; H 38; L 19, 22; N, S 20, 23, 82, 86, 87.
[206] D 55; H 49; T 70 and 94; S 20; L 23.
[207] D 55 and 85.
[208] See above, § **8.5**.
[209] See above, § **8.1.**
[210] Examples from H 22.
[211] But not so common as it is the case in Egyptian Arabic (see Rosenbaum, "Egyptian Arabic", pp. 300 ss.).
[212] L 23.
[213] H 42.

الحمام) *d-əl-ḥəmmām* "of the bath"[214], وْلَغْدّلِيهْ *u-l-ġədd līh* "and in the day after"[215].

11. Conclusion

It is clear that the orthography of Moroccan Arabic is today still far from being uniform: lack of uniformity and inconsistency are common features of all the analyzed texts. Variations between different authors are important: sometimes there are even orthographic incongruencies in the same text by the same author.

Several of the analyzed sources show a surprising high level of dilettantism and improvisation, probably due to the fact that their authors are not familiar enough with Classical Arabic. It is surely not a coincidence that the most uniform and clear orthography is found in works by recognized authors (sources **H**, **L** and **M,** for instance) which of course have more experience in writing Arabic.

But in spite of such handicaps, texts written in Moroccan are perfectly comprehensible for people who speak this dialect and the Arabic alphabet is not so ill-suited to reproduce the dialectal phonemes as some specialists think.

Moroccan Arabic is perhaps on the way to become one day a written language, as it is already the case with Egyptian Arabic.

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[214] L 32.
[215] T 94.

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Appendix 1:
l-Kenfāwi, *Ṣəḷṭān ṭ-ṭṳḷḅa* (source S), p. 105.

رَشِيدْ حْرْكَة كْبِيرَة هَذِي .. وَاشْ أُلنَّاسْ كَانْتْ نَاعْسَة ؟

اَلْخَلْطِي اَبَداً ...

رَشِيدْ و كِيفْ كَانْتْ أُلْعْطِيَّة ... ؟

اَلْخَلْطِي بْدِينَا بْأُلْحْبْسْ كَمَا اتّْفْقْنَا ...

عَبْدُ أُلسَّلَامِ كَانُوا عْبْدُه فِيه نَاسْ اكْثَارْ ...

اَلْخَلْطِي هَذَا أُلشِّي أُلِّي سْهّلْ عْلِينَا أُلأُمُورْ مْنْ بْعْدْ مَا طْلْقْنَا هَذُوكْ عْبَادْ
أُللّهْ أُلِّي كَانْتْ مْحْشُورَة مَا بْقَاوْلُه

رَشِيدْ كِيفَاشْ ؟

اَلْخَلْطِي هُمَ أُلِّي رَاهُمْ دَابَ مْعَ أُلاخْوَانْ كَيْسْتُولُوا عْلَى أُلْجَمِيعْ ..
(صُيَاحْ) هَا اَنْتَ كَتْسْمْعْ مْنْ هْنَا ...

عَبْدْ أُلْقَادِرْ وَ اشْكُونْ هَذَا أُلنَّاسْ ؟

اَلْخَلْطِي مْنْ عْدَّة قْبَائِلْ .. كُلْهُمْ كَانُوا مْسْؤُولِينْ فِيمَا قَبْلْ ...

عَبْدُ أُلسَّلَامِ وْ عْوَّالِينْ عْلَاشْ عْوَّالِينْ (صُيَاحْ)

اَلْخَلْطِي هَا هُمَ بْدَاوْ كَيْقْرْبُوا (صُيَاحْ) اسْمْعْ (صُيَاحْ)

عَبْدُ أُلسَّلَامِ مْنْ لِلِّي عْلّمْنَاهُمْ وْ فْسّرْنَا لِيهُمْ وَ لَوْ بِسُرْعَة أُلِّي جَابْنَا أُللّهْنَا وْ
مَا هُوَ أُلْغَرَضْ دْيَالْنَا ...

اَلْخَلْطِي وْ أُلْكَثِيرْ فِيهُمْ كَيْعْرْفْكْ وكَيْسْمْعْ بْكْ ...

عَبْدُ أُلسَّلَامِ حْلْفُوا تِلْقَائِيًّا ....

اَلْخَلْطِي حْتَّى يْجْعْلُوا مْنّكْ اَنْتَ اَخَانَا أُلرَّشِيدْ ....

عَبْدُ أُلسَّلَامِ اَخُونَا فِي أُلْعِلْمْ.....

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Appendix 2:

l-ʕĀlāmi, *Tqəṛqīb n-nāb* (source T), p. 74.

حْبيبي العربي بْرْگَاگْ كَيْفْلي الدْريَاتْ مَنْ الرَّاسْ لْصَّاگْ. كُلْ نْهَارْ، صيفْ وْشْتْوَا، كَيْشْري الجُّورْنَالْ وْكَيْچلْسْ يْتْقْهْوَى فَالشَّارعْ. قْهْوَة مْهْرْسَة أُگْويرُّو، أُنوبَة نُوبَة كَيْهزْ عينيه وْيْخْطْفْ شْويفَة. حْتَّى حَاجَة مَا غَايْبَة عْليه، تْبَارْكْ اَللَّهْ. طَايْرْ مْعَ الطّْيُورْ، أُكَيْعْرْفْ الدّْجَاجْ الْبْلْدي وْالدّْجَاجْ الرُّومي أُحْتَّى لْكْرْوَازي. هَادي زْوينَة، هَادي سْمينَة، هَادي مْقْزْبَة، هَادي مْحْتَجْبَة دَايْرَاهَا سْبَّة، هَادي مْهْبْطَة السّْمْطَة، هَادي كْريشْتْهَا عْرْيَانَة بْلاَ غْطَا، هَادي عْزْبَة بَايْرَة، هَادي فْصَالَة مَا دَايْرَة، هَادي سُبْحَانْ مَنْ خْلْقْهَا، هَادي غَادَة أُكَتْخْرْجْ الدُّخَّانْ مَنْ حَلْقْهَا. هَادي فَايْضَة، تْبَارْكْ اللَّهْ، هَادي شْويَّة وْخْلاَصْ، هَادي قُرْطَاسَة رْصَاصْ، هَادي مَا عَنْدْهَاشْ مْعَ الْعْرَا، أُهَادي وَاعْرَة، هَادي مْسْنْدْرَة، هَادي مْبْنْدْرَة، هَادي "تْفُو!" هَادي الْعْفُو، أُهَادي فيهَا الدّيفُو. وْعَادْ اَللّي مْزْوْجَة وْاللّي مْعْوْدَة، وْاللّي مْعْوْجَة. الْمْسْخُوطْ دْ العربي النّْهَارْ وْمَا طَالْ وْهُوَ چَالْسْ وْعَاسْ أُبْعينيه التّْنينْ كَيْتْكْرْفْسْ عْلَى بْنَاتْ النَّاسْ.

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Appendix 3:

Fāḍəl, *Ḥallāq Darb al-Fuqarāʔ* (source H), p. 46.

(لحظة . ثم تبدأ في جمع أمتعتها)

ميلود : علاش درتي هذا الشيء ؟ بغيت نعرف علاش ؟
محجوبة : ما عرفت .
ميلود : فين مشيتي معاه ؟
محجوبة : مرة واحدة دًاني للقهوة .
ميلود : آش درت لك حتى تكرفصي علي بحال هكا ؟
محجوبة : ما درتي لي والو. ما نقدرش نفسر لك ،
ميلود : قطعتي آخر خيط كيربطني بالدنيا . كنحس بحال إيلا كبرت . كبرت بزاف . في يوم واحد .
محجوبة : طلقتني ؟
ميلود : ايه .
محجوبة : ايمتا ؟
ميلود : هذا الصباح . **(صمت)**
كتعرفي . . أنا نقدر نسامح لك . ولكن الدرب . . الناس . . ما كانش يمكن ندير حاجة أخرى .
محجوبة : وأنا آش غادي نبقى ندير ؟
ميلود : انت اللي بغيتي هذا الشي . . أنا ما بغيتش نفرًّط فيك . . عارفك غاديها تكرفصي من بعد . ولكن ها أنت كتشوفي . . انت باقي ما كتعرفيش الناس . . الناس راه خايبين . . ما تقدريش اتصوري لاينا حد الناس خايبين . راس بنادم بحال شي بير معششة فيه ألف مصيدة . . الدنيا راه ماشي ذاك الشي اللي كيبان لك .

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes how Moroccan authors write today in their own dialect. Publications in Moroccan Arabic are rare: however, it seems that in the last years the situation is changing and Moroccan writers are beginning to pay more attention to their mother tongue, a language which allows them to reach better expressivity and more realism.

In this article, an outline is given of the mean orthographic features used by Moroccans when writing in dialect (particularly those diverging from the orthography of Classical Arabic).

In order to assure a representative sample, the research published here is based on data collected from several Moroccan sources of very different kind and printed along a gap of almost forty years.

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